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CIA ex-official's testimony, deposition differ

NEW YORK (AP) — A former CIA official who testified that communist militia forces were not militarily important in the Vietnam War seemed to express a different view a year ago in a deposition brought out in court yesterday.

A George A. Carver, the agency's top specialist on Vietnamese affairs from 1966 to 1973, was on the witness stand for a fourth day in the \$120 million libel suit filed against CBS by retired Gen. William C. Westmoreland, former commander of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia.

Gen. Westmoreland, 70, claims he was defamed by the 1982 broadcast, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception,"

which accused his command of systematically understating enemy strength in the months before the communists' 1968 Tet Offensive. The intent, CBS said, was to convince officials in Washington and the American public that the war was being won.

A key issue in the trial is whether Gen. Westmoreland's staff improperly insisted on excluding "self-defense" and "secret self-defense" units from estimates of enemy strength, known as "order of battle" reports.

Mr. Carver testified that the self-defense forces were made up of old men and boys as young as 10, and that they should not have been counted among the guerrillas who

confronted U.S. troops.

But in his deposition, which came out during cross-examination by CBS attorney David Boies, Mr. Carver had said the so-called "irregular" forces were an insufficiently appreciated factor.

Mr. Carver said in the deposition that he believed as early as 1967 that intelligence experts "ought to take a look . . . at all the components of organized or quasi-organized man- or womanpower to which the communists had some degree of access and assess their total contribution."

A Mr. Boies also produced a memo written by Mr. Carver in 1967 to CIA Director Richard Helms:

"We on the American side . . . have always drawn a sharper distinction between the guerrillas and the other paramilitary elements than is drawn by the communists. Evidence has recently come to light which suggests the [communists] may be further blurring this distinction to the point where our rather arbitrary U.S. breakout may be more misleading than helpful."

Mr. Carver testified yesterday that U.S. intelligence analysts, experienced in the methods of regular armies fighting conventional conflicts such as those in Europe, had difficulty adapting their methods to the conditions in Vietnam.

"Order of battle in the classic Western European military sense was essentially irrelevant," he said.